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ABSTRACT

This book explores the themes of citizenship, participation, and collective action in relation to education in Britain. It illustrates ways in which social class, gender, and ethnicity affect parent participation. Chapter one discusses the parent as consumer, partner, and citizen. A focus on parents as citizens in Britain reveals passivity and inactivity. Parent groups or parent-centered organizations may offer a solution, providing arenas where people can formulate their own agendas and critiques. Chapter two notes that the normative concept of being a good parent has strong class and gender associations. Chapter three focuses on how special education advice centers can change from giving advice to solving problems. Chapter four deals with responses to a course on sensitive mothering. Chapter five contrasts two parent-run groups, a campaigning group and a self-help group. Chapter six considers how refugee and asylum-seeking families fare in a competitive and increasingly managerial educational system. Chapter seven considers the wider implications of the relation of parent-centered organizations to citizenship and public participation. Parent-centered organizations can inspire debates on educational issues, formulate discussion on issues normally overlooked, and counteract passivity by offering arenas in which parents can participate as citizens in shaping educational opportunities for all children. (Contains 310 references.) (RKJ)

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